

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 080975

FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM UNA

FOL RPT ROME 5659 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA
BONN, CAIRO, DJIBOUTI, HAVANA, JIDDA, KHARTOUM, LAGOS,
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UNQUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5659

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR ET SO

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO ROME

1. MFA GAVE US BRIEFING MARCH 28 ON MEETING LAST WEEK BETWEEN
CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALMIERCA AND ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
FORLANI. ACCORDING TO MFA, FORLANI REMINDED MALMIERCA OF
CUBAN COMMITMENTS (MADE BY VICE-PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ TO ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR IN HAVANA AND BY CUBAN AMBASSADOR IN ROME TO FORLANI
HIMSELF) THAT AS SOON AS SOMALIS LEFT OGADEN, CUBANS WOULD
1) BEGIN THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM HORN, 2) WOULD ENCOURAGE ETHIOPIANS
TO NEGOTIATE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH SOMALIS, AND 3) WOULD NOT
INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN ERITREA.

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2. MALMIERCA CLAIMED THAT CUBAN POLICY HAS NOT CHANGED,
BUT TO ITALIANS IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IT HAS. MALMIERCA
SAID THAT SOMALI WITHDRAWAL WAS ONLY MILITARY PRECONDITION
FOR CUBAN WITHDRAWAL, BUT NOW POLITICAL PRECONDITIONS MUST
BE MET AS WELL. THESE, ACCORDING TO MFA, ARE IDENTICAL
TO MAXIMUM ETHIOPIAN DEMANDS ON SOMALIS INCLUDING NOT

ONLY RENUNCIATION OF ALL TERRITORIAL CLAIMS BUT ALSO CON-
COMITANT CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS.

3. AS TO ERITREA, MALMIERCA SAID THAT CUBANS STILL FAVOR
POLITICAL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN EPMG AND ERITREANS BUT NOW
CONSIDER THE SITUATION THERE TO HAVE CHANGED. SINCE THE
"REACTIONARY" ARAB REGIMES ARE SUPPORTING THE ERITREANS,
THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED FROM
AN INTERNAL REVOLT FOR AUTONOMY TO A REBELLION SUPPORTED
BY OUTSIDE FORCES--ANALOGOUS TO THE OGADEN CONFLICT. FURTHER-
MORE, THE ERITREAN STARTING POINT FOR NEGOTIATIONS, AS STATED
IN KHARTOUM, IS FULL INDEPENDENCE FROM ETHIOPIA: THIS TO
THE CUBANS IS NOT THE BASIS UPON WHICH TO NEGOTIATE BUT
RATHER CONSTITUTES ANOTHER THREAT TO ETHIOPIAN TERRITORIAL
INTEGRITY--JUST AS IN THE OGADEN.

4. ITALIANS BELIEVE THAT CUBANS HAVE NOT FINALLY MADE UP
THEIR MINDS ABOUT WHAT TO DO IN ERITREA BUT CONVERSATION LT WITH
MALMIERCA WAS OMINOUS. NEVERTHELESS, WHILE CUBANS MAKE
JUSTIFICATION ALONG LINES OF THOSE USED IN OGADEN, THEY,
AND SOVIETS, KNOW THAT ERITREAN BATTLE WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT
AND MIGHT INVOLVE UNACCEPTABLE COMMITMENT
OF MEN, MONEY AND TIME. GARDNER UNQUOTE COOPER

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